

23 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Soviet Internal Affairs Branch, OSI

SUBJECT: Excerpts of Material from SB/S/CI Operations

SOURCE: Male Soviet Ukrainian visitor to West European country in February 1967

1. A former West Ukrainian village school teacher receives a monthly pension of 65.50 rubles. Old age pensions are not sufficient for pensioners' needs. However, with the added income from private household plots, a person can live fairly well. A retired kolkhoz worker receives 12 rubles monthly, but he usually has a plot, a cow, a pig and several chickens.

2. Introduction of the old age pension for kolkhoz workers won a lot of sympathy for the government. Moreover, in addition, there appeared on the market more meat, fat, lard, and butter. There also is plenty of sugar. Sugar refinery workers receive extra bonuses in kind. Most collective farms pay cash. The kolkhoz workers prefer the old method of being paid in kind. It was easier to steal than it is now, and everyone must steal in order to get along.

3. Life in the cities has improved, although a street cleaner, for example, must work a whole day to earn enough to buy less than 2 pounds of lard and 4 pounds of sugar. Wages and salaries are not commensurate with work performed. An example of current pay scales: A young M.D. - 90 rubles, skilled laborer - 80 to 120 rubles, locomotive engineer - up to 200 rubles, street cleaner - 40 rubles.

4. Medical aid is more than adequate. There are a lot of kolkhoz workers in hospitals suffering from arthritis. Drugs are inexpensive, and medicine for infants is free.

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5. Villages are rebuilt and modernized. Thatched roofs are now an exception.

6. Kolkhoz chairmen are mainly local Ukrainians.

7. Russification is widespread in the Ukraine. The youth know little about the history of the Ukraine, the Kievan state, Mazepa or Petlura. What they have heard has been distorted.

8. The source said that in his opinion, all Soviet republics are colonies. Administrative posts in the West Ukraine are filled as follows: key posts are held by Russians who were brought to the Ukraine from the RSFSR; posts of secondary importance are held by Russians who were born in the Ukraine and by some Ukrainians; the lowest positions in the Western Ukraine are held by Eastern Ukrainians, and only a negligible number of West Ukrainians hold any post at all. Ukrainian bureaucrats are worse (in their dealing with the local population) than even the Russians, and West Ukrainian bureaucrats are "pigs". There was a meeting of Ukrainian writers and journalists in Lvov in the spring of 1966, at which time the status of the Ukrainian language was discussed, particularly in so far as radio and TV programs were concerned. Following the meeting, the language situation improved somewhat. There are now more Ukrainian-language programs, but there still are too many Russians holding key positions in these fields. Young intellectuals are looking for a change. The nationalist ferment among them is quite strong, although many of them are still mainly interested in their own careers and their own personal welfare. Pm Chypyskyi, a lecturer at the University of Lvov, who was tortured and banished from West Ukraine in 1945 because he slapped an MVD man in the face when the latter hit him, recently returned and was rehabilitated. Insubordination in the Ukraine, in the source's opinion, still is crushed with an iron hand and people disappear without a trace.

9. Ukrainians in general are happy about the Soviet-Chinese rift, but there is no known pro-Peking faction. There is not much expected from the rift, but the people are happy that the "almighty Russians" are having difficulties.

10. The black market is very much in existence. It is possible to buy everything from faries to gold rubles. Party members are often found among the racketeers. Those caught are dealt with severely.

11. An underground Catholic Church does exist. It is led by priests who refused to convert to Orthodoxy. They hold services in private homes. One of the priests in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast gave the source some money to buy prayer books in the West. The source said he did not think he would try to carry any on his return trip home because he did not expect he would be permitted to carry them across the border.

12. Jews, particularly in places where they live in large numbers, as for instance, in Charnovtsi, are disliked by the local population. The source

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felt the reason was because the Jews have a disdainful attitude toward everything Ukrainian.

AC/BB/S/CA

cc - SB/RR